

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8164

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 13028

FOLLOWING TEL MADRAS 1574 DTD 30 AUG 76 RCVD NEW DELHI
BEING REPEATED TO YOU. QUOTE

C O N F I D E B T I A L MADRAS 1574

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJECT: MORE ON KARUNANIDHI

REF: MADRAS 1497

1. DISCUSSING THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN TAMIL NADU, INSPECTOR
GENERAL OF POLICE E. L. TRACEY INFORMED ME ON AUGUST 25 THAT THE
DECISION WHETHER OR NOT KARUNANIDHI WILL BE ARRESTED IS "A POLITICAL
DECISION" WHICH WILL BE MADE IN NEW DELHI, STATING THAT WHEN
DELHI DECIDED THAT HE SHOULD BE ARRESTED, THE ORDER WILL BE ISSUED.
TRACEY WENT ON THE SAY THAT "THERE HAD BEEN PLANS TO ARREST
KARUNANIDHI" EARLIER THIS MONTH BUT THAT "THEY HAD BEEN CALLED
OFF." HE DID NOT ELABORATE ON THIS POINT. HE STATED THAT THE POLICE
INTEREST IN KARUNANIDHI'S ARREST IS "IN THE SPINOFF."

2. TRACEY WENT ON TO SAY THAT KARUNANIDHI IS AN EMOTIONAL MAN,
AND HIS MOOD REFLECTS HIS (KARUNANIDHI'S) ASSESSMENT OF THE
SITUATION AT THAT PARTICULAR TIME. FOR EXAMPLE, EARLIER IN THE MONTH,
WHEN HE THOUGHT HE WAS ABOUT TO BE ARRESTED, HE WAS VERY DESPONDENT.
NOW, WITH THE IMMEDIATE THREAT OF ARREST APPARENTLY REMOVED, HIS
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SPIRIT IS ON THE UPSWING. ADDED TO THIS, TRACEY POINTED OUT, WAS

KARUNANIDHI'S RELATIVELY SUCCESSFUL TOUR OF COIMBATORE, TANJAVUR, AND TIRUCHIRAPALLI AUGUST 20-22, WHEN HE DREW ENTHUSIASTIC CROWDS. STRACEY INDICATED IN THIS REGARD THAT KARUNANIDHI'S MOODS AND ASSESSMENT OF HIS PERSONAL PROSPECTS MIGHT WELL BE JUDGED BY THE TONE OF HIS PUBLIC STATEMENTS. (KARUNANIDHI REPORTEDLY TOURED THE ARCOT DISTRICT AUGUST 28-29, AND IS SAID TO HAVE TOURS OF SALEM ZCD CHINGLEPUT SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER.)

3. STRACEY PUT KARUNANIDHI'S ARREST IN THE CONTEXT OF ELECTIONS, INDICATING THAT IF THE CENTER THINKS IT BETTER TO HAVE HIM OUT OF THE WAY, AN ORDER FOR HIS ARREST WILL BE ISSUED. HE OBSERVED THAT THE CONGRESS (R) IS MAKING NO PROGRESS IN TAMIL NADU, AND HE STATED THAT THERE IS CONSIDERABLE "RESIDUAL CONGRESS (O)/KAMARAJ SENTIMENT" IN TAMIL NADU ARE "AT LEAST A YEAR OFF," THOUGH HE ADDED THAT THE SITUATION "IS STILL VERY FLUID."

4. V.P. RAMAN, ADDITIONAL SOLICITOR GENERAL OF INDIA INFORMED ME AUGUST 26 THAT, IN HIS OPINION, KARUNANIDHI WILL NOT BE ARRESTED UNTIL THE GOVERNMENT CAN BRING CRIMINAL CHARGES AGAINST HIM. RAMAN, WHO IS FROM MADRAS AND WHO WAS A MEMBER OF THE DMK AT ONE TIME, BELIEVES THAT ARRESTING KARUNANIDHI ON A POLITICAL CHARGE WOULD MAKE HIM A MARTYR AND STATED THAT HE HAS ADVISED THE GOVERNMENT THAT IT SHOULD NOT MOVE AGAINST KARUNANIDHI UNTIL IT CAN FRAME CRIMINAL CHARGES AGAINST HIM. IN THAT REGARD, RAMAN IS INCLINED TO BELIEVE THE GOVERNMENT WILL AWAIT COMPLETION OF THE SARKARIA COMMISSION HEARINGS, SINCE "THEY HAVE THE GOODS" ON KARUNANIDHI.

5. RAMAN INDICATED THAT, BECAUSE OF HIS BACKGROUND, HE IS FREQUENTLY CONSULTED BY THE GOI ON "THE KARUNANIDHI CASE," AND HE SAID THAT HE WAS SCHEDULED TO MEET WITH OM MEHTA ON AUGUST 27 TO DISCUSS THE CASE.
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